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The Political Leaders Weekly Bible Study

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Anger and Office



This week we will examine all that the Bible book of Proverbs has to say about **anger**. If you struggle with this sin, and who doesn't, or you hang with those who do, then this chapter is for you.

Read on, my friend.

Ralph Drollinger

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MINISTRY UPDATE

Following the Biblical Priority to Teach God's Word to Political Leaders



Making it a priority to teach God's Word to political leaders is an important biblical directive found in both the Old and New Testaments, but it is so often overlooked—even by biblical scholars. What we hear most often from new ministry leader recruits—including some pastors with seminary degrees—is that they never noticed the biblical directive to make teaching God's Word to political leaders a priority in the first order of importance.

In September last year, we heard this comment from a new ministry leader recruit at the Asia Recruiting and Training Conference held in Kathmandu, Nepal. "The training was wonderful because I did not receive such training before to reach political leaders for the Lord," he said. "This training is an

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I. INTRODUCTION

I have chosen to outline the study by first looking at the five roots of *anger*. Most of the time our *anger* stems from some sort of selfish sin, save righteous indignation. We'll look at different kinds of tempers to see what Proverbs says about how to tick someone off (in case you are deficient in this skill) and also how to avoid that. The remaining instruction from Proverbs teaches about how to live opposite of *anger*—in peace.

II. HEBREW WORDS DEFINING ANGER

The Old Testament (OT) Hebrew root words that appear in the following numerous Proverbs are all translated into the English word *anger*:

1. *Aph*: literally, "a nostril, nose, face" referring to the facial expressions of someone who is *angry*.
2. *Abar*: "to be arrogant, to become *angry*."
3. *Chemab*: "heat, rage."
4. *Ebrab*: "overflow, arrogance, fury."
5. *Kaas*: "vexation."

One can easily see the connection, the similarity of authorial intent in the use of each of these different words.

III. GREEK WORDS DEFINING ANGER

In the New Testament (NT), the following Greek words are translated into the English word *anger*:

1. *Orgizo*: this Greek word is the most commonly used word in the NT for *anger* and it means "to make angry." It appears in Galatians 5:20 in relation to the fruits of the flesh—those characteristics of the unregenerate that are at enmity with Christ—*idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy,*

sy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, etc. One famous commentary defines *orgizo* as, "jealousies, which, when smoldering in the heart, break out in wrath."

2. Ephesians 4:31 uses the same root, *orge*, when it commands those who have placed their trust in Jesus Christ for salvation to, *Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.*
3. Colossians 3:8 uses the same word when it states, *But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth.* As you can see by these passages, *anger* is not a tool available to believers in the Capitol (or anywhere else for that matter) for any reason or purposes save righteous indignation, as we will see later.
4. James 1:19 states the same word when it commands, *This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger.* Why? *For the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God* (1:20). All citations here in Roman numeral III refer to the same Greek word, *orge*.
5. Ephesians 6:4 contains a heightened form of the same root: *parorgizo*, when it commands, *Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.* The Greek word here is negated, meaning "not to provoke to *anger*." This is a contrasting statement: by *disciplining* your child, you are not provoking him to *anger*. More about that here is in order:



A Word About Spanking Children

Spanking is sometimes necessary to properly parent a child. In Proverbs 29:15, Solomon instructs Rehoboam not to prohibit God's institution of the family from carrying out this responsibly lest he end up governing a police state. Proverbs 29:15 reads, *The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child who gets his own way brings shame to his mother.* In other words, a child who is not disciplined when he rebels and displays willful disobedience will learn that he can get away with what he knows in his heart to be wrong; he will become spoiled. In Proverbs 23:13 and 14, King Solomon also says to the future king, *Do not hold back discipline from the child, although you strike him with the rod, he will not die. You shall strike him with the rod and rescue his soul from Sheol.* The Adamic curse is present in every child and the sin-laden nature is present in all mankind. A child who does not know his boundaries quickly and assuredly becomes unhappy and *angry*. Ephesians states that the parent who fails to discipline his child is, in essence, *provoking your [his] children to anger*. The child rebels in search of the security of those boundaries. Accordingly, a failure to spank creates a child who grows up to depict much of what follows in this study.

6. *Thumos* relates to being quick-tempered and indicates a more agitated condition, an outburst of wrath from inward indignation. While *orge* suggests a more settled or abid-

ing condition geared toward taking revenge, it is less sudden in its rise and more lasting in its nature.

Understand the root cause before you deal with an anger problem.

Having briefly overviewed five OT and four NT words related to *anger*, what follows are the five roots of *anger* from Proverbs.

IV. EXAMINING THE FIVE ROOTS OF ANGER

A. FROM JEALOUSY AND ENVY

The Hebrew word *qinah*, meaning “ardor, envy, rivalry, zeal,” is translated as *jealousy*. Some commentators define *jealousy* and envy as different, but twin sisters: *jealousy* being the attempt to guard what you are fearful another person might take and envy being the desire to have what another person possesses. Those are fine distinctions of the same genre of sin, but it is not as clear a distinction relative to the Hebrew words used in the book of Proverbs. *Jealousy* stems from a zeal to want what another person has which turns into *anger* when the expectations go unfulfilled.

For jealousy enrages a man, and he will not spare in the day of vengeance (Proverbs 6:34).

Wrath is fierce and anger is a flood, but who can stand before jealousy? (Proverbs 27:4)

On the book of Proverbs, commentator Charles Bridges writes,

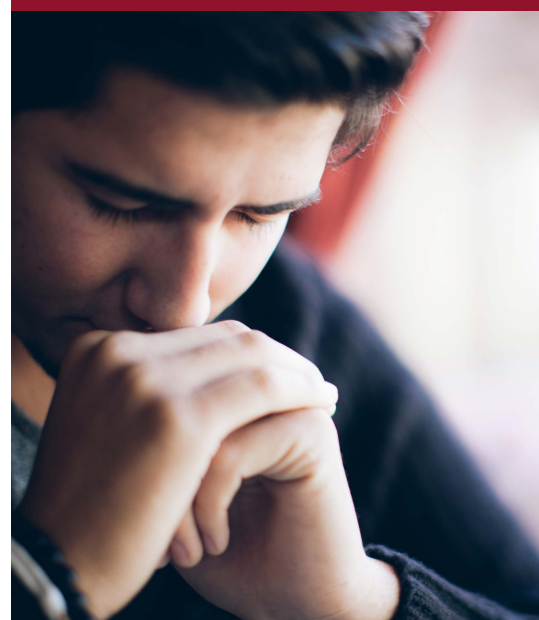
“Envy is an implacable passion with native principle. ... [I]t has a fearful train of evils. ... Reason [becomes] the oil to fan the flame [of this sin] rather than the water to quench it. ... Enmity invadeth their spirits and settleth itself.”

VERSE OF THE WEEK



James 1:19–20

Be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger; for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God.



Being slow to anger is akin to using anger in a righteous response to evil. It has its place and is a mark of true wisdom.





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eye opener for me that someone needs to reach the political arena of our own country!” Ralph Drollinger discovered that directive while studying the Bible shortly after he and Danielle, his wife and ministry partner, founded Capitol Ministries in 1996 to make disciples of Jesus Christ in the political arena throughout the world. First Timothy 2:1-4 reads: *First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.* Luke wrote the book of Acts to most excellent Theophilus, (Acts 1:1; Luke 1:3) addressing the recipient of the book with a title reserved for governors. Making God known to political leaders was also prominent in Old Testament Scripture. Solomon-the-architect designed the temple with God’s guidance to include an exceptionally large courtyard. Isaiah 60:11 evidences the idea that kings would travel afar to worship the God of Israel. *“Your gates will be open continually; they will not be closed day or night, so that men may bring to you the wealth of the nations, with their kings led in procession.”* You wouldn’t think that placing a trained evangelist and Bible teacher inside the capitols of the world would be a novel idea—but it is. This insight is one of the most significant truths we’ve gleaned in our 28 years of ministry.

Summarily, *jealousy* becomes a most uncontrollable sin, be it motivated by a fear of loss or a desire to have. It is often the underlying motive for angry behavior.

B. FROM HATRED

Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all transgressions (Proverbs 10:12).

The Hebrew word for *hatred* is *sinah*, meaning “malicious and unjustifiable feelings toward others.” *The Merriam-Webster Dictionary* defines *hatred* as, “prejudiced hostility.” Jealousy and envy stem from the fear of loss and the desire of wantonness, whereas *hatred* stems from a selfish-based belief that you are better than someone else. The sin is based in a Darwinian ideology that some are more fit than others. In essence then, rank pride is the seedbed of *hatred*. This epistemology is trumped by Scripture, however, which states that all human beings (and only human beings) are created in God’s image. Our theology then will ultimately determine the existence or else expungement of feelings of *hatred*. And hatred is a root of *anger*.

C. FROM INSOLENCENCE

Through insolence comes nothing but strife, but wisdom is with those who receive counsel (Proverbs 13:10).

The Hebrew word for *insolence* is *zadon*, meaning “presumptuousness, arrogance, and pride.” *Merriam-Webster* defines insolent as “haughty and contemptuous or brutal in behavior or language: OVERBEARING.” I like *Merriam-Webster’s* second listed definition as it applies to the Capitol community, “lacking usual or proper respect for rank or position: presumptuously disrespectful or familiar toward equals or superiors.” Show me a climber in the Capitol, and I will show you an *insolent* person who is easily *angered* when his path to the top is in any way thwarted. People who are overly ambitious for advancement set themselves

up for strife and *anger*. Oh, how I have personally seen this play out in too many short careers here on the Hill.

D. FROM ARROGANCE

An arrogant man stirs up strife, but he who trusts in the LORD will prosper (Proverbs 28:25).

In this Proverb the second stanza informs the meaning of the first. Akin to C, the arrogant “climber” will go to any length to immediately prosper—not really believing that advancement comes from the Lord.

Do not fuel your career with arrogance, selfishness, or ambition; most often they lead to an explosion.

Psalm 145:14 states, *The LORD ... raises up all who are bowed down.*

E. FROM FOOLISHNESS

When a wise man has a controversy with a foolish man, the foolish man either rages or laughs, and there is no rest (Proverbs 29:9).

No agreement can be made with a *fool*. *Fools* start their reasoning with their own mind—thinking it is the final and highest authority.

A fool always loses his temper, but a wise man holds it back (Proverbs 29:11).

When you disagree with a *fool*—one who thinks his or her mind is infallible—you can expect that it will produce *anger*. This is because you are challenging a pride-filled core, and we have seen, pride is the seedbed of *anger*.

In summary, these are the five roots of outward *anger*. Rather than take a Band-Aid approach, we must perform surgery on the root cause(s) of our *anger* in order to cure it. Only then will healing and victory occur.



V. EXAMINING THREE KINDS OF TEMPER

A. QUICK TEMPER

A quick-tempered man acts foolishly, and a man of evil devices is hated (Proverbs 14:17).

Like a city that is broken into and without walls is a man who has no control over his spirit (Proverbs 25:28).

Whatever is in the air will affect and invade this person's mind and emotions. He is thin-skinned, reactive versus prudent, and defensive versus discerning, and he allows others to affect his emotions. Especially in the world of political debate, he identifies and objectifies rather than react to ad hominem attacks.

B. HOT TEMPER

A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, but the slow to anger calms a dispute (Proverbs 15:18).

A man of great anger will bear the penalty, for if you rescue him, you will only have to do it again (Proverbs 19:19).

An angry man stirs up strife, and a hot-tempered man abounds in transgression (Proverbs 29:22).

C. SLOW TEMPER

He who is slow to anger has great understanding, but he who is quick-tempered exalts folly (Proverbs 14:29).

BE ANGRY, AND yet DO NOT SIN; do not let the sun go down on your anger (Ephesians 4:26).

Parorgismos is the Greek word for *anger* in the second verse meaning, "irritation." This is the only time *anger* is legitimate in the believer's life and it relates to righteous indignation. A leading NT commentator explains:

In this statement he [Paul] may be legitimizing righteous indignation, anger at evil which is done against the person of the Lord and His will and purpose. It is the anger of the Lord's people who hate evil. It is that anger that abhors injustice, immorality, and ungodliness of every sort.¹

Jesus was always *angered* when the Father was maligned or when others were mistreated, but He was never selfishly *angry* at what was done against Him. Our *anger* that is sin is defensive and self-serving and resentful of what is done against ourselves. It is the *anger* that leads to murder and to God's judgment.

Anger that is selfish, undisciplined, and vindictive is sinful and has no place even temporarily in the Christian life. But *anger* that is unselfish and is based on love for God and concern for others not only is permissible, but commanded.

Righteous *anger* and being slow to *anger* are evidenced in the following Proverbs:

The king's favor is toward a servant who acts wisely, but his anger is toward him who acts shamefully (Proverbs 14:35).

He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit, than he who captures a city (Proverbs 16:32).

Being slow to *anger* is akin to using *anger* in a righteous response to evil. It has its place and is a mark of true wisdom.

VI. HOW TO SOLICIT ANGER IN OTHERS

Just in case you are unskilled in how to *anger* others, here are some tips:

A. SPEAK HARSHLY TO OTHERS

A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger (Proverbs 15:1).

A fool's lips bring strife, and his mouth calls for blows (Proverbs 18:6).

Like charcoal to hot embers and wood to fire, so is a contentious man to kindle strife (Proverbs 26:21).

A stone is heavy and the sand weighty, but the provocation of a fool is heavier than both of them (Proverbs 27:3).

The truths of these Proverbs are self-evident and need no comment.

B. SLANDER AND SCORN OTHERS

A perverse man spreads strife, and a slanderer separates intimate friends (Proverbs 16:28).

The Hebrew word for *slander* is *ragan*, meaning "to murmur, whisper, criticize, and grumble." *Merriam-Webster* fitly defines *slander* as, "utterance of false charges or misrepresentations which defame and damage reputation."

A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city, and contentions are like the bars of a citadel (Proverbs 18:19).

The *brother* spoken of here is a blood relative in this colorfully depicted Proverb. No feud is as difficult to resolve as one with a family member and, therefore, extra care should be taken to avoid such conflicts.

The north wind brings forth rain, and a backbiting tongue, an angry countenance (Proverbs 25:23).

This describes cause and effect. As surely as it will *rain* with clouds from the north (Solomon wrote living in the Northern Hemisphere) *backbiting* will cause *anger* in others.

Scorners set a city aflame, but wise men turn away anger (Proverbs 29:8).



John Hancock



“Sensible of the importance of Christian piety and virtue to the order and happiness of a state, I cannot but earnestly commend to you every measure for their support and encouragement.”

— John Hancock, signer of the Declaration of Independence, president of Congress; Revolutionary War General, governor of Massachusetts.

Independent Chronicle (Boston), November 2, 1780, last page; see also Abram English Brown, *John Hancock, His Book* (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1898), 269.

Scorn is an emotion involving **anger** and disgust, passionate contempt, and disdain. Avoid being **scornful** in your personal and professional life. Realize that everyone in a fallen world has his faults—that should not surprise or disgust you if you are a Bible-believing Christian. If you are a Humanist, however, you have every right to be **scornful**, given your misguided beliefs in the upward evolution of man. You should be rightfully disgusted with everyone who is not as perfect as you believe yourself to be.

Prolonged **anger** yields increasingly worsening results. Notice the following Proverb with that in mind.

For the churning of milk produces butter, and pressing the nose brings forth blood; So the churning of anger produces strife (Proverbs 30:33).

Churning, **pressing**, and **churning** are all the same Hebrew verbs colorfully portraying the fruit of **anger**: **strife**.

C. STEP ON OTHERS

He who loves transgression loves strife; he who raises his door seeks destruction (Proverbs 17:19).

In a parallel Proverb, each stanza helps to interpret the meaning of the other. In this one, the second portion is an idiom that denotes pride. *Merriam-Webster* defines idiom as “an expression established in the usage of a language that is peculiar to itself either in grammatical construction or in having a meaning that cannot be derived as a whole from the conjoined meanings of its elements.” This image is of a proud man who flaunts his wealth—a man with a huge house and front door. Jeremiah 22:13–17 qualifies the meaning of this idiom in its time of use, further stating, “*Woe to him who builds his house without righteousness, ... who uses his neighbor’s service without pay. ... But your eyes and your heart are intent only upon your own dishonest gain.*” Such

outward selfish behavior infuriates others; such could be likened today by drug lords living in mansions while their business—selling drugs—causes lives to be ruined. Such is portrayed in the following Proverb:

He who sows iniquity will reap vanity, and the rod of his fury will perish (Proverbs 22:8).

Scripture often speaks in terms of **sowing** and **reaping**, i.e., the end result of an earlier action, cause and effect. Such is the case here. Stepping on others will make them angry.

D. BRIBE OTHERS

A gift in secret subdues anger, and a bribe in the bosom, strong wrath (Proverbs 21:14).

In this contrasting Proverb, the second stanza implies a perversion resulting in a **wrathful** reaction by the recipient. It is one thing to give a gift to quell **anger** in another (to offset a wrong action as a means of making up); it is quite another thing to **bribe** someone with your wealth.

VII. HOW TO AVOID ANGERING OTHERS

A. COVER SIN

The fury of a king is like messengers of death, but a wise man will appease it (Proverbs 16:14).

The Hebrew word for **appease** is *kaphar*, meaning “to cover over, pacify, and make propitiation.” Solomon states that it is a desired skill when working with those in political power to propitiate for their weaknesses—don’t make everything that is wrong about a person an issue! Many are those who live by the letter of the law, awaiting and exploiting the sins of others. Scripture, however, has much to say about grace. Grace is unmerited favor (*for by grace you have been saved through faith*



[in Christ]) and is a principle of wise living. Notice the following passages that serve to buoy this concept:

Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all transgressions (Proverbs 10:12).

A man's discretion makes him slow to anger, and it is his glory to overlook a transgression (Proverbs 19:11).

Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins (1 Peter 4:8).

This advice isn't related to murder, rape, robbery, or the like. Rather and in addition, generally speaking, it is better to address someone's minor sins once you've built a relationship with him—and to do it in private. Covering, versus exploiting, another's weaknesses will lead to peace versus *anger*.

B. ABANDON QUARRELS

The beginning of strife is like letting out water, so abandon the quarrel before it breaks out (Proverbs 17:14).

The Hebrew word for *strife* is *rib*, carrying a broad generality of “disputes, adversaries, complaining, contending, controversies, indictments, lawsuits, or quarreling.”

Hone your skill of sensing when divisive situations might occur and intercede prior to their maturation.

Keeping away from strife is an honor for a man, but any fool will quarrel (Proverbs 20:3).

At this particular juncture in the outline, another very special skill at living life is contained in Proverbs 26:17. It pertains to the foolishness of entangling yourself in another's transgression. It is wise not to get involved in quarrels between others that have nothing to do with you.

Like one who takes a dog by the ears is he who passes by and meddles with strife not belonging to him (Proverbs 26:17).

C. RESTRAIN YOUR WORDS

He who restrains his words has knowledge, and he who has a cool spirit is a man of understanding (Proverbs 17:27).

The Hebrew word for *restrains* is *chasak* and means “to withhold, keep back.”

D. KEEP YOUR DISTANCE FROM SCOFFERS

Drive out the scoffer, and contention will go out, even strife and dishonor will cease (Proverbs 22:10).

For those in positions of leadership and power, this is good advice. If you do not possess the authority to root such from your midst (for instance, a family member), at least register a strong protest to his actions. To do less is to live with his fruits.

Do not associate with a man given to anger; or go with a hot-tempered man, or you will learn his ways and find a snare for yourself (Proverbs 22:24–25).

Be careful whom you *associate* with: “*Bad company corrupts good morals*” says Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:33. Definitive of bad company is this:

For their minds devise violence, and their lips talk of trouble (Proverbs 24:2).

Don't be around this kind of person unless you are evangelizing them.

VIII. THE BENEFITS OF PEACE VS. ANGER

Better is a dry morsel and quietness with it than a house full of feasting with strife (Proverbs 17:1).

A parallel Proverb is 15:17: *Better is a dish of vegetables where love is than a*

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fattened ox served with hatred. It is wise to be in the presence of those who are poor and loving rather than rich who *hate*. We live in a society consumed by gaining social status—hanging out with the rich and famous—celebrity is one of America's idolatrous gods. See that for what it is.

The king's wrath is like the roaring of a lion, but his favor is like dew on the grass (Proverbs 19:12).

This Proverb is akin to Romans 13 and 1 Peter 2: all are called to submit to governmental authority. In both of these NT passages there is resulting favor (cf. 13:3; 2:14), peace. Proverbs 20:2 portrays a parallel emphasis:

The terror of a king is like the growling of a lion; he who provokes him to anger forfeits his own life (Proverbs 20:2).

To live in non-rebellion with governing authorities, even though you might not

agree with their many decisions, is to live peacefully.

IX. CONCLUSION

If you suffer from frequent outbursts, my prayer is that this study will help you to find the root cause.

Whereas you can cover up and create a façade, your level and frequency of *anger* should act as a barometer to indicate how sinful and self-absorbed you really are—and subsequently your need for Christ as Lord and Savior.

Righteous indignation, on the other hand, is a measure of your love for Christ. Are you *angered* over the things that *anger* God? Therein is an indication of spiritual maturity. God bless you for standing firm where Scripture is firm. Amen.

1. John MacArthur, "Can Believers Be Angry Without Sinning," Grace to You, 12/27/2023: <https://www.gty.org/library/bibleqnas-library/QA0135/can-believers-be-angry-without-sinning>

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